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AGRICULTURAL SHORTCOMINGS

Livestock Industry: Central and local transmitters continue to highlight the insufficient attention given the livestock industry, the shortage of skilled mechanics, administrative inefficiency and the unenthusiastic approach to field work. As spring sowing gets underway in the southern and central areas of the country, the farmers are being urged toward achievements, toward "laying the foundation for a bumper crop." However, related field operations such as the construction and repair of livestock premises, fodder procurement, etc. should not be neglected.

A report from Tambov on 14 April says that an Oblast Party Committee investigation into the livestock industry showed "a considerable drop in the number of livestock," low productivity of cattle and "a general nonfulfillment" of the plan. Sufficient fodder had not been stockpiled last year, and the shortage is already being felt. Despite unceasing pressure, much of livestock is still kept in inadequate quarters which "lack indispensable facilities" for proper maintenance. Listed as "lagging far behind the plan" are at least 10 rayons where local leaders have relegated stock breeding to a secondary role, neglected the upkeep of pastures and failed to maintain the sanitary standards for watering places, which "are now overgrown with shrubs and turning into bogs."

In its review of the livestock situation, PRAVDA (17 April) says that immediate and drastic measures will have to be taken if the slow rayons and oblasts are to catch up. Furthermore, the cattle-raising industry of some oblasts has actually deteriorated:

In the collective farms of Vologda, Kostroma and Kurgan oblasts considerable losses of grown and young stock were sustained in the first three months of this year. The situation is also unsatisfactory...in Bashkir ASSR, Orel, Tyumen and certain other oblasts.

Russian text:

V kolkhozakh Vologodskoy, Kostromskoy, Kurganskoy oblastey za pervie tri mesyatsa etogo goda dopushchen zhachitelniy otkhod vzroslogo pogolovya skota i molodnyaka. Neudovletvoritelno obstoit delo takzhe...v Bashkirskoy ASSR, Orlovskoy Tymenskoy i nekotorykh drugikh oblastey.

Fodder production is still inadequate "in several oblasts, krais and republics" where natural pastures cannot yield anywhere near the necessary supplies without "advanced agrotechnical measures...and a concerted effort."

A lack of regard for regulations governing the stockbreeding and other branches of agriculture is noted by RADYANSKA DONETSCHINA (18 April) as one of the major sources of trouble in the oblast. Agricultural experts are not given responsibility so they might "exert a beneficial influence" on farm production. "Thoughtless" kolkhoz chairmen and MTS directors prefer their own obsolete methods of farming. The Starotaryanskaya MTS, for example, has even demonstrated indifference to scientific advice: "the agronomist for fodder procurement has been made a station dispatcher." Elsewhere, little has been done to improve the care for cattle, and this reflected by "low productivity and decreasing milk yields."

SEVERNAYA PRAVDA (21 April) admits the "justness" (spravedlivost) of PRAVDA's criticism of the Kostroma Oblast livestock industry. It is true, says the paper, what great cattle losses and other "serious and impermissible shortcomings" have been allowed to occur, and certain rayons appear little perturbed by their failings. Among them are Manturovskiy, Orehovskiy, Buy, Kadiyskiy, Mezhevskiy and Ivanovskiy rayons. The decision of the Moldavian Party Central Committee on current agricultural

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operations, quoted by Kishinev on 21 April, notes unspecified "serious mistakes and shortcomings" in Republican agriculture, clearly reflecting official disappointment with the progress in the field. The Moldavian Communist Party, it states, "has decided to put into effect" the decisions of the 19th Party Congress to increase agricultural crops, raise the number of communal cattle and give more attention to stockbreeding. Local Party and agricultural officials are urged to introduce "advanced agricultural technology" wherever possible.

Machine-Tractor Stations: Regional broadcasts continue to stress that tractor breakdowns occur far too frequently and that improper use of available equipment is responsible for the failure of MTS to meet their "collective agreements" (kollektivnie dogovora--which applies exclusively to contracts between MTS and collective farms). KIROVOGRADSKA PRAVDA points out editorially on 15 April that the fulfillment of collective agreements usually "surpasses all time limits set down by the law" because they are not taken too seriously. However, it implies that the MTS' desire to abide by the agreements is often frustrated by the lack of equipment in good working order and the shortage of qualified personnel to operate it. Citing cases of contract violation by both parties, the paper points to the MTS as the major offender since failure to maintain the required amount of operating equipment defeats the agreement in advance.

They do not manifest the necessary care for the highly productive utilization of powerful technology, do not eliminate the technical deficiencies of the machines in time, thus wasting valuable time and threatening the harvest yield.

Several hundred new tractors and combines have been received in Stalino Oblast in the first two years of the current five-year plan, but this has not been followed by a corresponding improvement in performance, according to SOTSIALISTICHESKIY DONBAS of 15 April. This is because "many hundreds of tractor-shifts are wasted." In Dobropolskiy and Konstantinovskiy rayons the organization of tractor maintenance and repair work is so poor that "it takes days to mend minor breakdowns" which should be fixed in one or two hours. ZNAMYA KOMMUNIZMA says that the planting of late crops, already overdue in some southern rayons, "is far from completed" due to serious shortcomings in the performance of MTS servicing those rayons. The struggle for a bumper crop, it is asserted, is now hindered more than ever before by the "idleness and low productivity of tractors," and the outlook appears still grimmer in view of the fact that "even the sowing of early crops" has not been completed in a number of rayons.

A Koslcy report from Minsk carried by PRAVDA on 22 April (not broadcast) reveals that although thousands of new tractors and other agricultural machines had been received by the Belorussian MTS before spring sowing began, not all of them were brought out to the fields. It may be said "without exaggeration" (bez preuvelichenia) that even the so-called leading MTS and collective farms of the Republic are not making the best possible use of their technical facilities.

Even now more than 1,000 tractors are laid up at the MTS compounds awaiting repairs. Some of the machines stopped working in the fields as a result of defective winter repairs.

Russian text:

Po sey den boleye 1,000 traktorov stoit na usadakh MTS, ozhidaya remonta. Chast mashin ostanovilas v pole, skazalo plokhoye kachestvo zimnego remonta.

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Mogilev, Vitebsk and Minsk oblasts are mentioned as critical areas where most collective farms, waiting for warm, sunny days to begin spring sowing, have already missed the "most favorable" time for that work. Socialist competition in the fields is virtually non-existent, according to Kozlov, and those ostensibly engaging in it are actually only "putting up a front." Pinsk has been competing against Brest Oblast for the highest attainment in flax-planting, but while Pinsk has already completed 20 percent of the plan, Brest keeps up the slow pace which is reflected in its plan-performance index of 2.4 percent.

Tadjik Cotton Production: A report from Stalinabad broadcast on 15 April quotes a recent decree of the Tadjikistan Council of Ministers noting "great difficulties" connected with cotton raising this year. The decree reveals that cotton planting last year was "held up by exceptionally unfavorable conditions" and that "urgent measures" must be taken to get the planting done on time this year. The Republican Ministry of Agriculture, Soviet officials, and "every kolkhoz, sovkhoz and MTS" are exhorted to help obtain a better cotton crop this year by completing the planting "not later than 25 April."

A KOMMUNIST TADJIKISTANA editorial broadcast on 15 April makes the unusual announcement that "there are still too few enlarged kolkhozes" in the Republic. Previous references to this theme gave the impression that the merger of the small kolkhozes into larger units has in general been completed. The paper criticizes the "inadmissible views" of certain Republican agricultural authorities who are still oblivious of the fact that single-crop farming is frowned upon by the authorities. Cotton-raising alone should not be used as a substitute for multicrop farming in Tadjikistan, where "prevailing conditions offer great possibilities" for the development of all branches of agriculture.

Azerbaijan Cotton Production: A decree issued by the Azerbaijan Council of Ministers (23 April) in connection with 1953 cotton-raising and deliveries, contains the implicit admission that last year's failures are beyond repair and had best be forgotten.

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The crop debts which Republican collective farms incurred under the 1952 contracts are written off in order to help the kolkhozes.

Prompt cotton deliveries are to be rewarded with larger supplies of consumer goods, and the Azerbaijan Union (Azerittifik) has been instructed "to allocate goods for those making cotton deliveries." On the other hands the "lessened quotas" set for the newly opened irrigated lands and the fodder-growing areas "are to be abolished." There is no indication of the size of the 1952 "farm debt" or of the present norms as presumably outlined in the decree.

Miscellaneous: Indifference to new labor-saving devices on the part of agricultural administrators, including the USSR Ministry of Agriculture, is discussed in an article by Shibakov published in IZVESTIA on 15 April. Krasnodar Krai alone, he says, now has about 25,000 "rationalizers and inventors" (ratsionalizatory i isobretately), but their inventions are often shelved by those whose should popularize them. Flagrant disregard for technical innovations and improvements is cited in the case of a new self-propelled winnowing and sorting machine (veyalka-sortirovka) which can be operated by a crew of five people instead of 40 as before, and capable of increasing the output of sorted grain several times. So far none of the authorities, from the rayon to the All-Union Ministry level, has shown much interest in it. Nor is this the only case, since "many machines which merit the widest distribution still remain as single production samples." (Mnogie mashiny, dostoynie samogo shirokogo rasprostranenia, imeyutya poka v edinstvennom eksemplare.)

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A new combine attachment for gathering castor-oil plants, constructed by two stakhanovites at a cost of about 700 rubles, is reported to have reduced production costs, compared to manual work, by 20 times. However, the krai agricultural department and the USSR Ministry of Agriculture did not appear impressed even though the machine had already been "sufficiently tested at work" (dostatochno proverena na praktike).

Other agricultural shortcomings admitted by regional transmitters during the period under review are:

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14 April--Last year the oblast as a whole failed to gather the prescribed harvest and did not fulfill the plan for the delivery of sugar beets.... Unfortunately the oblast as a whole is still developing sugar-beet planting extremely unsatisfactorily (RADYANSKA ZHITOMIRSHCHINA editorial);

17 April--Field work is not being carried out everywhere with the required energy and intensity. Stanovlyanskiy, Livniy and Kolpnyanskiy rayons...are sowing perennial grasses at an impermissibly low tempo (ORLOVSKAYA PRAVDA editorial);

21 April--Spring sowing is not being conducted in an organized manner everywhere. In Kirghizia, for example less grain and beans have been planted than by this time last year.... Cotton planting is proceeding too slowly (PRAVDA editorial);

22 April--Up to now one-half of the combines and more than one-half of the grain-cleaning machines in the oblast have not been repaired. The preparation of transportation facilities and grain silos is unsatisfactory (KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA editorial).

IDEOLOGY

Soviet Legality (zakonnost) and the friendship of peoples are among the major themes exploited in press and radio non-economic propaganda. There is more frequent emphasis on the Government, as distinguished from the Party, in terms of power and authority than heretofore. The law of the land, as defined by the Constitution, is stressed as something immutable, to be respected and obeyed by everyone regardless of rank or position. Prominence is given the "inviolability of the person" (neprikoznennost lichnosti). There can be no legalistic equivocation on that point, according to an unsigned KOMMUNIST article (6 April) referring to the arrested security officials involved in the "doctors' plot." The Soviet State has already demonstrated its attitude to corrupt officials who "dared make a mockery of the inviolable rights of Soviet citizens..." (posmeli nadrugatsya nad neprikoznennymi pravami sovetskikh grazhdan).

Regional comment on the people's constitutional rights has followed the line indicated by the 6 April PRAVDA editorial, reprinted by all central newspapers, on the final disposition of the doctors' case. Increased attention to the citizens' protection under the law is reflected also in May Day slogan number 17, which speaks of rights "guaranteed by the Constitution" and "sacredly safeguarded" by the government.

The friendship-of-peoples topic is often discussed in contexts of law and unity and against the background of the May Day slogans. RADYANSKA UKRAINA (16 and 24 April) stresses the familiar line that the salvation and happiness of the Soviet nationalities lies in their unity. The value of this unity to the Ukrainian people is shown by the "gigantic strides" made by their Republic in industry, agriculture, literature and art, and in the unification of "all their lands" (usni svoi semli) in a single Ukrainian Soviet (24 April). LITERATURNAYA GAZETA (25 April) quotes Lenin to the effect that the USSR has always been "a voluntary union of nations" (dobrovolny soyuz natsiy) based on mutual confidence and the realisation of fraternal unity. The paper points to the unprecedented cultural achievements of the non-Russian nationalities under the Union by citing the increase in the number of books published since 1913.

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Collective vs One-Man Leadership: A lengthy Slepov article in PRAVDA (16 April) says that collectivism, meaning Party committees or conferences, is the "highest principle of Party leadership" (vysshiy printsip partiymogo rukovodstva). That theory, says the author, was first expounded by Stalin who said in 1931 that the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the "supreme tribunal" (areopag) of the organization, represented true collective leadership. The experience of individual Party leaders, no matter how broad, "will never replace the initiative and experience of the entire collective."

This type of leadership, which is in keeping with the precepts of intra-Party democracy, Slepov implies, is being violated on a large scale. Some Party secretaries have in fact gone so far as to ignore the opinions of other committee members and held Party conferences with only a few of the members participating. Referring to the potential abuse of power involved in strong individual leadership, Slepov hints that intimidation of committee members is not unknown within the Party. There are cases when the "improper behavior" of individual leaders is overlooked by the committee members, who are reluctant to "spoil relations" (isportit otnoshenia) with them. Such members apparently find it healthier to "adapt themselves" (podlazhivatsya) to the leader's opinion and to "say ditto to everything he says" (poddakivayut emu vo vsem). The most rigid adherence to the principle of collective leadership in the Party, Slepov concludes, "is a guarantee of correct leadership" (yavlyaetsya zalogom pravilnogo rukovodstva), and is the only way the Party can rid itself of high-handed bureaucrats, on the one hand, and the "unbearable atmosphere of toadyism" (nesterpimaya obstanovka ugodnichestva), on the other.

K. Ivanov's discussion of the recent reorganization of the Ministries and State leadership in general, as outlined in his PRAVDA article on 26 April, is not completely consistent with Slepov's item on Party leadership. The ministries have been expanded and their leaders vested with broader powers, he says, so that they may adopt and implement decisions unhampered by "artificial barriers." The new ministers will also be in a position to "implement more elastic planning" (osushchestvlyat boleye gibkoye planirovanie) in which respect they apparently have been hamstrung in the past. "Centralized" or "one-man leadership" (edinonachalie) is, according to Ivanov, what an efficient State apparatus requires. (The author makes no reference to "collectivism" or collective decisions on basic issues which are repeatedly emphasized in Slepov's discussion of Party leadership). The different lines pursued by these authors in the treatment of the Party and Government leadership themes are exemplified in the following quotations:

Slepov on Party leadership, 16 April

Individual decisions are always or almost always one-sided decisions. Hence the most important requirement is that decisions...represent the outcome of collective creativeness.

(Edinolichnie reshenia vsegda ili pochti vsegda byvayut otnobokimi resheniami. Otsyuda vazhneysheye trebovaniye, chtoby reshenia...byli plodom kollektivnogo tvorchestva)

Ivanov on Government leadership, 26 April

The perfection of the state apparatus and the broadening of the ministers' powers signify a further strengthening of centralized authority, an enhancement of the leader's role.

(Sovershenstvovanie gosudarstvennogo apparata, rasshirenie prav ministrov oznachayet dalneysheye ukreplenie edinonachalia, povyshenie roli ukovodatelya)

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